

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 HAVANA 01707 212245Z
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S E C R E T HAVANA 1707

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EO 11752: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINS CU
SUBJ: CUBAN VIEWS ON PRISONER EXCHANGE

REF: A. HAVANA 1654; B. STATE 153322

1. BELGIAN AMBASSADOR TOLD ACTING USINT CHIEF, JUNE 20, THAT JUNE 16 CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ MESSAGE INDICATING WASHINGTON POST STORY ON LUNT-LEBRON EXCHANGE WAS "FALSE" (SEE REF A), WAS NOT RECEIVED DIRECTLY FROM CUBAN VICE-PRESIDENT, BUT RATHER FROM ONE OF LATTER'S PERSONAL AIDES CARLOS MARTINEZ SALSAMENDI. BELGIAN ADDED THAT MARTINEZ SALSAMENDI AGAIN REPEATED IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION, MORNING JUNE 17, THAT EXCHANGE REPORT WAS "FALSE". (FYI BELGIAN AMBASSADOR WAS NOT YET AWARE OF CASTRO'S JUNE 16 STATEMENTS DURING JUNE 17 CONVERSATION. MARTINEZ SALSAMENDI MAY ALSO NOT YET HAVE BEEN INFORMED. END FYI.)

2 BELGIAN WONDERS WHETHER THERE MIGHT NOT BE SOME AUTHENTIC DIFFERENCES OF VIEW WITHIN CUBAN HIERARCHY ON QUESTION OF PRISONER EXCHANGE. BELGIAN RECALLED THAT CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ WARNED HIM, BEFORE VIST OF BELGIAN MNISTER OF TRADE SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, THAT LUNT CASE SHOULD NOT BE BROUGHT UP IN BELGIAN MINISTER'S MEETING WITH FIDEL CASTRO.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 HAVANA 01707 212245Z

3. COMMENT: IF THERE ARE DIFFERENCES OF VIEW IN CUBAN HIERARCHY, WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ IS ONE OF THOSE OPPOSED TO EXCHANGE. LATTER'S POLITICAL VIEWS APPEAR TO FOLLOW SOVIET LINE AND PRESUMABLY VOGEL'S EFFORTS HAVE HAD ENDORSEMENT OF MOSCOW. CASTRO HIMSELF MAY HAVE BEEN OPPOSED TO IDEA, BUT HIS PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS IN FRONT OF US AND CUBAN POPULACE (INTERVIEW

WAS PUBLISHED IN GRANMA, JUNE 19, AND AIRED IN FULL ON CUBAN TV, JUNE 20), WILL MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO BACK DOWN. NONETHELESS THE POSSIBILITY THAT EITHER CASTRO OR OTHER POLITIBURO MEMBERS MIGHT HAVE HAD RESERVATIONS ABOUT PRISONER EXCHANGE ARGUES STRONGLY FOR RAPID US RESPONSE TO CASTRO PROPOSAL BEFORE SECOND THOUGHTS SET IN.
GLASSMAN

SECRET

NNN

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